



A FEW

Suggestions

ON THE

SLAVE TRADE.

BY HOMO.

1814.

A few Suggestions, &c.

WHEN men of the most opposite principles happen to agree upon any important question, nothing short of complete evidence can produce their coincidence. Now it happens that the man of the greatest reputation as a Statesman in this country, the man most renowned for religious principles, and the fiercest republican in France, shall I say Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mirabeau, have been advocates for the Abolition of the Slave Trade: and against such authorities who will venture to defend it? How comes it to pass that even the continuation of it for five years has been allowed by the able minister who has negociated the late treaty of peace? Men of warm imagination and strong feeling may for a moment, in the ardor of their zeal for humanity, think the war itself had better have been continued, till the abolition was allowed as a leading article in the treaty; but cooler heads will suggest the question, who do you mean to go to war with? Is it with the good French king? Is it with our magnanimous Allies? Is it with the mass of the French nation? They

all disapprove of the Slave Trade. Why then allow it to continue for a moment? Without attempting to search too deeply into the secrets of diplomatic negotiation, when we observe how much has been done, and in so short a time, and in such important matters; we may allow the plenipotentiaries some credit, for perhaps not being able to accomplish at once every object of their wishes. What then? Is the abolition a bubble, a tub thrown to the whale, to amuse minor politicians, and take off their attention from deeper operations? No. A great deal has been done, but a great deal still remains to do.

With the powers of a regular and well-established government, in the highest perfection of social order, directed by pure religion and sound morality, how many years elapsed before the Legislature of this country could bring about this important measure? And do we wonder that in the distracted state in which the allies found the French nation, they could not accomplish at once, what we had been so long in bringing into effect.

But the treaty is ratified, and we must abide by it. And so we are bound to obey acts of parliament—till they are repealed. Treaties as well as laws are subject to modifications, explanations, restrictions, which give full employment to statesmen during the intervals of peace: and these operations have perhaps already begun.

The opinion of this country has been loudly proclaimed, by respectful Addresses to both Houses of Parliament, and they have already had some success. The publication of our sentiments in the French papers may soften some of the prejudices which oppose us, and lead the way to a fuller discussion in the approaching Congress of Vienna, and bring the business to a more favorable issue.

Thank God, we are at peace with France: a time must come, and I hope soon, when we shall be at peace with

America. And when we treat with the Americans for that purpose, may we not with great propriety require their hearty co-operation with us, in putting an end to the abominable traffic? Holland already adopts our views, and as a trading country, holds out a noble example to other nations.

The Pope appears sensible of the share the exertions of this country have had in promoting his restoration. He must feel grateful for the privileges which our government has granted to the Catholics, and it may perhaps depend upon his future conduct, whether their emancipation may not be more complete. Can he refuse his assistance, by his influence with the nations who acknowledge his authority, to exert it to the utmost in wiping off the deepest stain from the Christian world? Who can be more deserving objects of the thunders of the Vatican than *Pirates* and *Stealers of Men*?

Had it not been for our assistance, Spain and Portugal would now be provinces of France; and can they refuse, when they have a government, to join us in the abolition? Vain would be our prohibitions to our own colonies, if Spanish and Portuguese slave ships covered the American seas, from the coast of Africa to the Brazils. But if England, Holland, France, and America joined hand in hand in this laudable undertaking, Spain and Portugal could not refuse their consent to the measure.

But whatever other nations may do, let us not overlook what is in our own power. We have already free settlements of negroes on the coast of Africa. Let these be cherished, extended and improved. What more deserving object can there be, for a regular and constant Committee of Parliament to protect? Public grants aiding private subscriptions, may in time form a capital that will overpower the base speculations of slave merchants. Our agents may even afford to forestall the markets, and buy

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slaves to emancipate them, settle them with our colonists, animate their industry, by inviting men of all nations willing to assist in their civilization and defence, supply them with arms, and protect them as our allies.

But is Great Britain equal to such complicated and extensive operations? Perhaps it may be thought so, by those who consider that every point carried is a step to facilitate the success of the remainder. In truth a new æra opens before us; it is impossible to say what may not be done after what has lately happened. What the indefatigable exertions of a Pitt, and the brilliant talents of a Fox could not accomplish—the deliverance of Europe from a most intolerable scourge—has been completed by the steadiness and perseverance of a Liverpool and a Castlereagh. May they call round them a constellation of men of talent, and by their joint exertions in the cause of humanity, deliver the unfortunate Africans from the great oppression which they have so long suffered.